

280616

FAA-04-17458-3



Badlands National Park COMMENT CARD

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
04 MAY 11 PM 2:32

Please print legibly

Name and Business Affiliation (if any): Jeremiah (Jay) DavisStreet Address: 1123 Northeast Dr.City: Rapid City State: S.Dak. Zip Code: 57701Email Address (if any): _____ Telephone number: (605) 348-5867

COMMENTS

Helicopter flights over Badlands National Park should cease. It is alarming that 4,099 flights per year are being allowed, and that a new company is planning to fly over the park. The Badlands is a small ribbon of land, protected solitude surrounded by ranch land and rural communities. Inevitably, the helicopters fly lower over the park than they should.

I have had my serenity and solitude spoiled by low-flying helicopters. Specifically, the trail to the "Notch" in the northeast part of the North Unit, is vulnerable to the noise of the flights. It is a rugged, but popular, trail which involves climbing a rope ladder to the top of the Badlands Wall, then hiking to a promontory that affords a spectacular view of the White River valley (and the park's visitor center). The trail is relatively close to the point from which helicopters take off. They fly low enough to "spook" any wildlife.

Helicopter flights are an incompatible use for the Badlands. It is a false argument to say that we need helicopters to accommodate disabled visitors to the park. They can see spectacular views of the park from vehicles. If I live long enough to be physically disabled, I would rather remember the special hikes I took when I was younger, rather than spoil the peace and solitude of the next generation of hikers.